PRAYING FOR MONEY

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Spiritual Telepathy
Day of Pentecost
Axioms
Praying for Money
Unanswered Prayers
Prayer for Others
Forms of Prayer

By

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Spiritual Telepathy

I

Chapter I

Spiritual Telepathy

IT would be no more surprising for the discovery of a means of direct spirit communication with the spiritual life than it was to be convinced that Marconi had discovered a sure method of telegraphing and telephoning without wires. The discovery of the laws which made electricity a servant of mankind was an astonishing revelation which was as unbelievable as is the law of spiritual telepathy. Human telepathy, which is a mysterious means of communication between persons without the use of known material agency, is in the initial and experimental stage. But the possibility of such thought transference is generally admitted. The psychical researchers into that science should be encouraged in every way. On the eve of every such advance in human achievement there

always appear a host of superstitious dreamers and wild prophets, even in the study of science, who hinder the sane searcher and often becloud the mind of the student who is on the direct road to the needed discovery.

Spiritualism, which is here used as a comprehensive term, frequently confuses the deliberations of honest truth-seekers with the advertised works of deceivers, but it includes much in its curriculum that is worth careful study. Among the host of disordered or weak minds who claim so much that is foolish in connection with spiritual revelations there are a respectable number of thoughtful, conservative searchers who cannot be easily deceived. In all the successful "isms" in a Christian civilization, and in all the popular religious sects, there is ever some basic truth. Some one idea is so true and so strongly emphasized that it often carries along a back-breaking load of absurd theories. The thoughtless throng hears of several well-authenticated

cases of fraud, or of absurd teaching, in connection with spiritual meetings, or messages, and leaps to the conviction that all claims of so-called spiritualists are not worthy of consideration. So many thousands have tried so sincerely to recall their dead without the least sign of an answer that they refuse to examine the testimony of great men, like Sir Oliver Lodge, whose belief differs from their belief. They will not read what great minds have expressed on the subject. But the great discoveries recently made in materialistic sciences have led thoughtful men to hope for great discoveries in the relation of this existence to another life. This expectation, or strong hope, made the study of the spiritual revelations and conditions at the Temple a most thrilling occupation.

The reports of the answers to prayer so often use the words "happened to think" that the observer cannot escape the conviction that either the living human mind does send spirit messages or that some

mysterious power acts for it in forwarding messages. The great list of mysterious impulses and intuitions which were noticed in those interesting seasons of prayer could not have been all accidental nor could they be classed under the natural laws of cause and effect. The connection between the cause as seen in the prayer and the effect as related in the "happened-to-think" result is often wholly hidden.

A mother in Philadelphia prayed for her prodigal son and at that exact time the son, alone in a Chicago hotel, felt an uncontrollable influence to turn back to his home. A father prayed that his son might decide to be a missionary, and the son, a sailor off the coast of South America, at that same moment made the decision. A wife prayed that her husband might be sent home sober. At the time she was kneeling by the kitchen table he was waiting at the saloon to be served with brandy, but he "happened to think" that his mother had prayed for him on her deathbed and he could not take the liquor.

A doctor, sadly defeated in his fight for the life of his patient, went to his bedroom and prayed for light, and he "happened to think" that the patient might have swallowed some piece of metal. There was no report of the like symptoms in any case he could find in the medical books. But so deep was the impression that he secured a powerful magnet and drew forth the death-dealing needle. A merchant had an offer for his entire stock which seemed favorable, and, as he was in need, the offer seemed providential. But while the suggestion from the pulpit that each worshiper pray for success in his occupation was being adopted he prayed for his business. At that hour his son in Denver was also praying in church. When he there thought of his father he decided fully to go home and enter business with him. So completely did he decide that the next morning he telegraphed to his surprised and delighted father that he would come home if his father needed his assistance. The joy of having his son at

home again overcame his determination to complete a favorable bargain, and he declined the offer promptly. Before the son reached Philadelphia a sudden change in the paper market doubled the sale value of the father's stock.

One writer for a daily newspaper was meditating on some object of prayer in the silence of the praying congregation when the idea of a textbook on journalism for college use came to his mind for the first time. It led directly to a series of syndicate articles which enabled him to purchase the home for which he had been praying. A mechanic who had been out of work, owing to a fire, prayed for a job. At the same time a builder who was a stranger in the church was praying for a competent partner. When the prayers were finished they "happened" to look at each other across the church and each wondered why the other looked at him so intently. The pews in which they sat were at right angles and it was a natural thing for the occupant of one

pew to glance at the inmate of the other pew. After church each approached the other with the simultaneous expression, "It seems to me that we have met before." But that was their first meeting. Their firm is now engaged in large construction work in concrete houses and factories. A servant girl in a small home prayed for a dress suitable for church and at that hour her mistress was visiting a friend who remarked that the photograph of a deceased daughter greatly resembled the visitor's servant girl. A few minutes later the friend of the mistress said: "I wonder if my daughter's dresses would fit your servant? If they will fit her, there are here two new gowns that the dressmaker sent home after my daughter's death."

So a young man, without advanced education, prayed hard for an opportunity to get mental training to fit him for the ministry. At the same moment a principal of a New Jersey academy was in the gallery far removed from the young man and he

prayed for direction in finding a suitable janitor. The academy principal mentioned his need to one of the church members who "happened" to know the young man. It was arranged that the young man should work for his board and tuition and have five hours a day for study. The worshiper described himself in his sketch of the answer to his prayers as one whom "God has led into the fulfillment of all his highest ambitions." He is pastor of a strong church in Cleveland. A little tot prayed for a "singing doll," and her mother told her that a doll was too small a matter to pray for. But the father overheard the conversation, and, after purchasing the most costly one he could find at his noon hour, he left it on the little one's bed in the night when everyone else was supposed to be asleep.

A widow prayed for some leadership in the sale of some wild land in Louisiana.. Her relatives urged her to let it go, as the "taxes will soon eat it all." But the unexpected payment of a debt due her led her to feel

that, as she had been temporarily provided for, she would wait. In about seven weeks she read in a paper that a company had struck oil on the next section to her estate. She consequently leased the mineral privileges of her land at a high price.

A minister prayed for a sermon text and found that the Sunday-school superintendent had thoughtlessly left in the Bible the Sabbath before a slip of paper on which was written the title which Mary Magdalene used when addressing Jesus in the Garden near his tomb: "Rabboni." The minister now remembers that sermon when nearly all others are forgotten. A student whose mental faculties were unusually dull for his age prayed that he might pass his examination in mathematics. That night in his dreams his subconscious self worked out plainly on a blackboard the two hardest problems. A farmer prayed for some deciding hint in his choice of seed for his land. On his way home he held a bundle in his lap which was in a newspaper wrapper. In

one column on the wrapper directly under his eyes was an article on the soils and products of his country which opened his vision and made his farming safe and profitable. An Alsatian girl prayed that her father and mother might come to America. They knew nothing of her petition, but on that same day and hour, allowing for the difference in the reckoning of time, the parents resolved to come to America, and financial aid was promised them. A lawyer was asking the Lord for some clew to lost evidence, so necessary to his case to be tried the next day, when the name of a witness whose relation to the case he had not before thought of, and whose name had been long forgotten, was suggested to him. While doubtful of the value of the witness, he sought his name in the directory and found that the lost witness was all-sufficient for the case. A dealer in real estate asked the Lord to prosper a proposed transaction, if it were for the best, and to hinder it if it would be injurious. He unintentionally omitted

the word "not" from the draft of a contract which he drew the next day and the "accidental" omission brought him to unexpected possession of a profitable block of houses.

To the unbeliever all these testimonials prove but little. But to the experienced observer of repeated answers to prayer they are conclusive proofs of God's disposition to answer the "effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man." As a woman may feel when she puts her weary life into the care of a strong and affectionate husband, the trusting believer in prayer rests in God in a peaceful condition of soul which passeth all understanding.

Day of Pentecost

II

Chapter II

Day of Pentecost

THAT great day at the Baptist Temple stands out in the history of the local church there even as the greater Pentecost must have been first in the memory of the disciples at Jerusalem. No one who entered personally, body and soul, into the services of that Easter in Philadelphia can possibly forget the overpowering impressions of the Divine Spirit. "Tongues of fire" seemed to the spectator no longer an extravagant metaphor to use. For the sake of a careful examination of the question whether the baptism of the spirit is of God or men, the plain facts are here stated.

It was Easter morning, 1893, when the sun began to gild the City Hall tower. People flocked to the lower hall of the Temple from all directions. Each greeted the other with the words, "He is risen," and

faces glowed as they assembled. There was no prearranged program and no announcements. The people began to sing with enthusiasm before the leader ascended the platform. Then came the moment of silent prayer. It seemed as if "the place was shaken." The whole company trembled as if they realized they were in the visible presence of the Almighty. The most conservative shed tears. There were many brief expressions from the audience, and often three were speaking at the same time. There was no shouting, no riotous disorder, no wild movements of uncontrolled emotion. Excited crowds at political gatherings, angry mobs, and panic-stricken crowds seem to have a form of that emotional common pressure. But that Easter gathering was a surrender of soul to the telepathic influence of a common spirit. One elderly Quaker shouted at the close of the meeting, "I would like to stay here forever," reminding all of Peter's call for three tabernacles on the Mount of Transfiguration. There was

an intermission of an hour before the morning preaching service in the auditorium. But the people would not go out for breakfast. Some fasted all day. They talked about Christ and of their home in Glory and exchanged promises to pray for friends, for missions, and for churches. Before the hour of the established morning service the large upper Temple had overflowed. There had been no advertisement of the services. There were no unusual decorations of the auditorium and no special music provided. The preacher had not prepared a sermon, nor had he read over that morning a selected chapter. He had been too much crowded with visitors and pressing calls of the needy and dying to devote even a half an hour to mental preparation. But no feeling of doubt or of weakness entered his heart. He felt a strange support and uplift of soul which kept away all fears. He had not decided to preach at all, and hesitated whether he had not best venture on an "experience meeting" in the time usually

allowed for the Easter sermon. But the choir was inspired; they, too, felt the impression of a solemn convocation. They never sang like that before, and the old tunes were vibrant with a resurrection life. The people sang and wept. City officials, principals of the schools, court judges, and merchants, let the tears fall. There seemed to be an absolute surrender of all classes to a common pressure toward God. The preacher arose with a most powerful impulse to kneel and weep. He forgot to announce a text, but he began to talk brokenly on the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene in the Garden near the tomb. His vision of the scene was so real to him that he has never through the years lost that clear view of it. The preacher seemed to be there in the Garden. He saw the Lord; he heard that divine voice; he saw that lovely face, the smile which greeted Mary. The preacher heard the conversation, saw the excited woman fall at her Saviour's feet, and heard him say, "I am not yet ascended unto my Father!"

Oh, where is there a language to describe to mortal men the all-pervading glory and the thrills of angelic joy which the preacher experienced under those circumstances? To himself he seemed to be taken out of his physical limitations. He was not himself. He was a higher personality. He saw visions of beauty and heard the harps of Glory. He lacks no words nor thoughts. He speaks the ideas which are given him. There is no other joy on earth with which to compare that. It is so unlike the richest or sweetest emotions which other forms of happiness awaken. It is supreme! Unaccountable things occurred that morning which no prolonged or hard study has explained. The preacher cannot feel sure that he was inspired, and hesitates to mention the facts lest men should doubt their truth or ascribe to him an egotistical claim to sanctity. But the experience with that sermon, and sometimes with other addresses, presents a psychological study which none of the authorities on mental law

have yet explained. The stenographic report of the sermon showed that the speaker quoted from Homer, Justinian, Macaulay, Shakespeare, Longfellow, and Molière accurately, without hesitation, in the onrush of his excited speech. But when he read them in the shorthand report he could not remember that he ever had read those quotations and was absolutely unable to recall that he used such words. The interpretation which he unhesitatingly gave of the scene in the Garden and of the words of Jesus were also new to him and caused him anxious hours of research afterward to learn whether his views could have been correct. But no sermon in his forty years of work in the pulpit has proven so reasonable or so generally acceptable to the devout critics of Scriptural exegesis. He has tried to account for the quotations by accrediting them to the telepathic influence of stronger minds in the audience who were familiar with them. But that, too, can be only a guess. The mystery is not cleared up by such specula-

tion. Perhaps the preacher should have called in some one else to write this chapter; but that "some one else" is not on call. Hence, these incidents are set down without a claim to uncommon inspiration.

Probably thousands of priests and preachers have felt a like exaltation. But the closing hymn which began with general participation by all the people was so broken before its close that the last verse was carried only by a few. The people wept for joy. The preacher knelt at his chair and prayed for aid to lead in the prayer and benediction. But the benediction was not heard, and the audience was slowly convinced that the benediction had been pronounced by the observation that the minister dropped his hands and walked away.

The Bible-school service in the afternoon was as solemn and impressive as the morning. Many of the hundreds baptized that day expressed themselves as having felt the dovelike Spirit of Peace descending on them,

too. Nearly, if not all, the scholars and visitors turned sincerely and permanently to the Lord.

The evening services were given up wholly to praise. The rejoicing was deep and strong. The crowd standing in the aisles and on the steps did not move until after the benediction. The number of those in the sittings was three thousand one hundred and thirty-four, and of those standing who got inside the doors was seven hundred and eighty-three. Out of that number over three hundred decided openly to confess their belief in the Christ. These numbers are not especially great when compared with those of the great revivals, and are only mentioned here for the purpose of study. Over seven thousand converts have been taken into the membership of the Temple in thirty-nine years, but they have not been the direct results of seasons of special revival.

Great were the expectations of the church at that Easter as they prepared for a great

immediate harvest. But it was not gathered then. The personal, individual gathering of converts continued as usual. The great Pentecostal visitation seemed to have had another purpose. Each candidate for baptism as usual required individual instruction and often continued prayer before he or she could be thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a public confession of our Lord.

But the members of the church had in the Pentecost received a new baptism of spiritual fire, and the interest in missions and in the Bible was greatly increased. Five missions were established which soon became strong churches. Young men arose by the score to study for the ministry, and large gifts were made to the Temple University. Many kinds of local enterprises for the poor, the drunken, the foreigners, and the aged were opened by them in the city and suburbs.

Axioms

III

Chapter III

Axioms

THE prayerful soul must be sure that "God is," and that he heeds the call of his children. The religious soul must believe in a real Divine Being. One condition necessary to successful prayer is a fixed belief in the Maker of all things. The Christian should keep his brain supplied with "axioms." An axiom is a self-evident truth, an immovable, unchangeable fact. It is a fundamental principle of which all sane men are cognizant. It is a statement of truth which is below and above all argument—a truth which all men recognize as a part of their mental existence. An axiom is simply a reference to a necessary condition in the framework of the human constitution. Every living man acts on those conditions, whether he recognizes them or not. The man whose common sense

recognizes those immovable principles builds his belief and action on them safely. Prayer, like all other religious things or conditions, needs to have a sure foundation. Therefore, axioms which are used as the basis of mathematical science are true everywhere, and the worshiper needs to recognize them as fully as the civil engineer. Here are presented some of the axioms on which the believer safely rests his faith. They cannot be proven, because they are vitally and essentially true. Their nonexistence is positively unthinkable. If these axioms are not essential to all mental action, then the world is a dreamy unreality.

"Two parallel lines will never run together or cross each other." All recognize the absolute truth of the statement, and yet no one ever went to the end of the lines to get local evidence of the fact. "Two halves are equal to the whole," states the college professor before his class. He would be an idiot if he tried to "prove it." He may illustrate the idea by cutting an apple into

halves and putting them together again. But the essential truth of the proposition every mind had accepted before he mentioned it. "'Two quantities or objects which are equal to a third quantity or object are equal to each other." A boy smiles at the waste of time in telling him such an axiomatic or self-evident fact. But the instructor is not attempting to inculcate a new principle, but rather to call attention emphatically to an immovable fact woven into the vital fabric of all human minds. The thinker who stands squarely on those fundamental facts can trust himself and can be trusted by all. A careful review of one thousand and twenty letters relating to established cases of successful prayer showed that the believer accepted as fundamentally true axiomatic facts of which the following is a partial list. We know only because the mental knowledge is an essential part of our intellectual existence. We therefore know:

That two and two make four.
That we exist.

That we are independent, thinking beings.
That there is moral obligation to do right.
That there is good and evil.
That our essential self is not the body.
That every effect has an adequate cause.
That all things made had a Maker.
That there must have been a First Cause.
That all things change.
That nothing can be annihilated.
That wickedness should be punished.
That goodness should be rewarded.
That all happiness depends on the state of mind.
That there is a permeating spirit moving on all the events about mankind.
That man must eat to live.
That when man has done his best, yet his success still depends on Providence—often called Good Fortune or Good Luck.
That prayer can influence external conditions.
That light is not darkness.
That love is not hate.
That up is not down.
That the future is not the past.
That all men must leave the body.
That mankind is sinful.
That somewhere justice must be done to clear up the inequalities of this life.
That men essentially evil would not be at home or welcomed in a heaven occupied only by the good.

That worshiping an ideal of perfect righteousness makes the worshiper like the ideal, as a perfect model makes a more perfect statue.

That some things have more intrinsic value than others.

That the highest satisfaction of soul is in the communion with God.

That the soul is indestructible and must live forever.

These axioms are unchangeably true, and all doubts or attempts to "prove" them bring only confusion and partial insanity. To doubt generally that we see or feel or smell or think is to undermine all knowledge and to make life a crazy jumble. Some things we do know; it is suicidal to doubt them. These are mankind's chief good. They constitute the world's greatest treasure, which is "everyday common sense." If common sense, unadulterated, be given any man he will worship God. The keenest scientist cannot safely leap off that one ship.

One of the testimonials wherein the author, who was never a student in the "school of doubt," tells why he came to

feel the necessity of prayer relates to one day's experience. He had decided, after much thought, just how he would use his time before he left his little home in the morning. He had made up his mind to take a trolley car, but a heavy truck had fallen on the track, so he was compelled to change his plan and walk. He reached his small store one half hour late, and a customer that he had arranged to meet had called and gone. He intended to call on a salesman, of whom he was to purchase a new stock of goods, and the telephone was out of order, owing to the effects of the electricity of a distant thunderstorm. He sent for a cab for the purpose of visiting the salesman at the hotel in another part of the city, but the horse attached to the cab fell at the store door and broke necessary parts of the harness. The accident made his proposed trip useless, because of the delay. He ordered his lunch which he usually ate in the back store, but he did not get time to eat it, owing to a visit from a salesman from New

York, who wished him to take a large bankrupt stock of a new line of goods. The coming profits seemed large and sure. He would have missed that trade had the car been on time or the telephone in order or had the horse not fallen. Even the lunch he had so confidently expected to eat was thrown away. He went home at night with an entire change in his plans, and entered on a new line of trade. His wife was absent, attending on a sick neighbor, and his evening paper was too torn to read. When he knelt at his bedside that night to pray the feeling of utter dependence on God's providence made him throw himself on the Lord as he had never done before. And after he was in bed he could hear his daughter entertaining her company in the parlor by singing, "I'll go where He wants me to go." That merchant was a man of great discernment and honest daily piety, and is said to have acted as agent for the government in the war time in the purchase of ninety millions' worth of his line of goods

Another writer told of a young student for the ministry who came home on a visit to his village church and tried to prove that the world was not created by a personal God, that "evil and sickness are only delusions," and that "we do not exist." But an old farmer, noted for honesty, and whose common sense had caused the people to insist on his holding for years the office of mayor, arose after that leader of the meeting sat down, and remarked, "I still believe that, after all that has been said, my cows are real cows, and my wife is real, Christ is real, and my tax bills are real; and I believe that that young man will some day come to himself, and admit that he was a theological idiot." But that old farmer also testified that he did not feel the need of asking Christ for definite things, but declared that prayer was his daily recreation, and all things worked together for good.

Praying for Money

IV

Chapter IV

Praying for Money

IN all the forty years of praying, of which only a partial record could be kept, there was no topic more satisfactory than the experience of such a large company in praying for money. There was no prearranged plan of procedure and no speculative purpose to obtain the help of God in the accumulation of property. But for some reason, which is not now recalled, there was given out for an evening's meditation the topic, "Shall we pray for money?" There was a strong division of opinion, some asserting that we are not authorized to pray for anything but for the Holy Spirit. Others asserted with complete confidence that prayer should be made for anything which we felt we needed. The majority appeared to be assured that men must work and seek only "the kingdom of God," and that they

should believe that all other things would be given from God as we should have need. Fortunately or providentially the men and women who held to the theory that God commands his disciples to pray for money determined to put the matter to a fair test. They were led by a consecrated deacon, at whose house they held the weekly meetings. They did not ask the Lord for money at first, but prayed daily for instruction on the important question whether it was a duty, or was permissible, for men to pray for success in their secular business. There were four men and several business women whose experience was especially valuable. One of them was the owner or partner in a bookbindery. The company of believers devoted an entire evening to prayer for the prosperity of his business. They agreed, further, to pray for that one thing in unison at twelve o'clock each day for one week. The conditions were especially for observation, as the owner of the business was a devout, unselfish Christian who had de-

termined, years before, to give a tenth of all his income to the Lord's work, and he stood willing to give his all if any good cause demanded such a sacrifice.

The first week was without visible result, and some who were weak in faith abandoned the attempt to test the matter in that way. But the small number left began to study the conditions to which the Lord had required obedience in order to be certain of a favorable answer. Their first conclusion was that it is right to ask the Lord for the necessities of life, which always included food, clothing, shelter, health, and worship. The good deacon stated that he had all of those things. He, however, stated that he owed quite a large sum in his business obligations, and he had prayed to the Lord to aid him in paying his debts. Then with one accord that company decided to pray for that one thing.

The amount of the debts cannot now be recalled, but it was several thousand dollars, contracted for business furniture and ma-

chinery. Although there are several witnesses living, it is difficult to state with assured accuracy the amounts involved. But to those who shared in the experiment the principal facts stand out clearly in the memory. The first noon prayer was on Wednesday, which was the day following the prayer meeting. The deacon, after his noon lunch, went into a publishing house on Chestnut Street, as was his custom almost daily. There he was introduced to a gentleman from Washington, D. C., who told the deacon that "for the first time in life" he had forgotten his train. He did not know the deacon's business when he told the deacon that he must return to Washington without visiting New York, as his business in Washington could not be left longer without immediate attention. But in his explanation he mentioned that he intended to give out a contract in New York for the binding of blank books for the government. When the deacon mentioned the fact that he was a bookbinder, and doing the same

kind of work, immediately the gentleman became interested, and remarked that he did not know before that such work could be done in Philadelphia. He made some inquiry in the store and, finding the deacon's reputation for integrity and honesty was very high, he arranged with the deacon to put in new machinery, to hire another floor in the building, and agreed that the government should make an advance payment on the first order.

The deacon hurried to another member of the prayer circle who was a jeweler also on Chestnut Street and, with a tear, declared that the Lord had already shown his hand in his business. The third day, as the deacon was looking at some machinery, the salesman told the deacon that he had heard that a New York bindery was going out of business on account of a larger opportunity for the firm in another line of work, and the salesman advised the deacon to go over and see it. When the next weekly meeting of the prayer circle was held

the deacon had bought in New York all the machinery that he needed, all in good condition, and at an astonishingly low price. Ever after that the deacon, when he entered his office in the morning, shut himself in for ten minutes and prayed for the Lord's direction in his business.

Another prayer test followed by the agreement of that prayer circle to pray for the jeweler, who was one of the circle and whose business was in a most deplorable condition. The jeweler was old and forgetful, and his son had moved out of the city rather than stay among his acquaintances when the inevitable financial wreck should come. The jeweler stated his condition fully to the meeting, and even declared his intention of calling a meeting of his creditors as a preliminary to bankruptcy proceedings. He said that the condition was so manifestly his own fault that all he dared ask of the Lord was that the creditors would be lenient toward him.

Two or three days after that meeting the

jeweler's son was called to Philadelphia to attend the funeral of a member of his wife's family. After the funeral, while talking with a manufacturer from Baltimore, who was one of the mourners, the son said that his father was a first-class clock maker of forty years' experience, but that he was unfitted for the management of finances. The manufacturer said that he needed an experienced man to superintend a new factory in Baltimore, then under construction. The son advised his father to write to the manufacturer for the job to begin work when he should close his Chestnut Street store. The jeweler wrote a long description of his troubles, and asked for employment. The manufacturer, after receiving it, took a train to Philadelphia and then spent the afternoon and the greater part of the night in trying to make a reasonable estimation of the value of the Chestnut Street business. The outcome of that examination was that the manufacturer took over the whole business, paid off the debts, and formed partner-

ship with the jeweler which opened into a prosperous trade.

An old lady who must have been one of that prayer circle wrote that she recalled the fact that the circle agreed to pray for her business, which was then a "notion store" on Columbia Avenue, Philadelphia. She writes that soon after the united prayer for her business began there was a fire which destroyed the store next to her lot. In the reconstruction of the next store the owner was anxious to build larger and offered her an unexpectedly large sum as a bonus and also desired to combine in a partnership with her to put both stores into one general store. The bonus she invested in an annuity, and the business afterward paid her enough to live in all the comforts of a cultured life.

It is said that everyone of that prayer circle became prosperous, but it may be helpful to mention one more of the most remarkable cases. A young clerk in a great national bank, who came from a farm to

learn what he could there of finances, stated freely that he was getting all that he was worth to the bank, and that he was contented with his financial condition. He told the circle that he did not wish to be included in their prayer list. But when the reports began to come in of the successful prayers and the circle grew in numbers and in interest he began to consider how much more good he could do if he had a larger income. He handled thousands of dollars daily, and checked up often the accounts of prosperous and generous business men of the city. At last the desire to be of more use to the Lord led him to begin to pray for money. Finally, he confessed his changed attitude and asked the circle to give one week of prayer for him. A few days later an epidemic of the grippe laid in bed all but three of the bank's employees. One day the assistant cashier and the clerk were the only persons on time at the opening of the bank. They persuaded a vice president of another bank to come to their assistance, and he was

so impressed with the young clerk's efficiency and coolness that he offered him the place of assistant cashier in his own bank. The position was finally accepted, and led to his promotion, a few years after, to the presidency of the bank.

The experience of that prayer circle was more or less the general experience of the church members. The suggestions of a church service, the aid to an honest and industrious life, and the greater health of church members, generally confirm everywhere the fact that the Christian faith and habits are surely the most favorable for "the life that now is, as well as for the life which is to come."

In connection with this phase of our narrative there should be written a brief account of an experience which surprised even the most conservative minds. Appeals for subscriptions have been made rarely in the Temple. Such appeals have accomplished but little. The regular gifts of the many persons have steadily paid all expenses and

provided enough over to finally pay off all debts.

But there were seasons when unusual sums were needed and when the money was furnished from some unexpected sources seemingly in direct answers to special prayer. On one occasion there was an especially large sum given into the treasury when it was imperatively needed and when no notice of the need had been given from the pulpit. On one Sunday morning the preacher could find no other satisfactory subject on which to build a sermon, and he talked with the people about the Bible-school lesson for that day. The subject included a description of how the Jews were required to select the best lamb of the flock for an offering to God. They did not hope that God would hear their prayers unless they gave their best to the Lord. The sermon closed with a sentence or two of application to our own times. The emphatic exhortation stated that offerings and prayers should go together, but the

offering should precede the prayer. At the evening service some person sent to the pulpit a note, asking that the printed order of services "be changed so as, thereafter, to substitute the word 'offering' for the word 'collection.'" The minister, acting on the impulse of the moment, announced a change in the order of the services, and said that as the ancient custom of making an offering before asking the Lord for a gift or blessing was surely acceptable to God, an "offering" would be taken before the prayer, instead of after the prayer. No unusual sum came in that evening. The notes of the church were coming due ten days later. But those debts were not thought of by minister or ushers in any relation to that offering, though prayers were often made for the help of the Lord in the payment of the debt.

The following Sunday morning the collection was said to be the largest ever received by the ushers; while the fact was not mentioned from the pulpit, it was the subject

of general comment among the people after service. At the evening service the offering was so great that one of the ushers related how he had to go out and empty the basket he was passing and come back to finish taking the offering. Nothing else had been done or said, and the church notes were paid as a matter of course. But the prayers made that day were made immediately before the offering was taken. The question was put to the audience twice to ascertain if anyone who made a special offering on that particular day had not been answered, and there was no exception in the mass of testimony to the efficiency of each prayer that day. The recitals of the marvels which followed that prayerful offering were too startling for general belief. The reports may have been exaggerated in the time of such general excitement, but the people had complied with the conditions, and God had answered clearly according to his promise. They had "brought the tithes into the storehouse," and the Lord had poured out

the blessings as an infallible result. The letters which came to the officials of the church relating incidents concerning the effects of the prayers made that day were not filed then as they have been in later years, and the record here must depend wholly on the memory of two or three witnesses.

The following partial list of cases is very nearly correct. The cases of sudden and in some cases instantaneous recovery of the sick were related by hundreds of people. In one case a poor man whose only living child was insane put his money into the basket that morning and prayed for his child's recovery. Both he and she often declared that while being forcibly given a cold bath at the time that offering was made she felt "a loud report in her head like the report of a pistol," and her mind was found to be normal in all respects from that instant. The father went to the sanitarium that afternoon, as was his custom on the Sabbath, and his daughter met him at the door in her right mind.

A lady sold her best clothes and all her jewelry on Saturday and brought the whole of the proceeds and gave all as an offering as she prayed for her own healing. She suffered greatly from sciatic rheumatism, inherited from several generations. She fell on the front steps of the church, as they were helping her to the carriage, and arose to find the pain had permanently disappeared.

One old gentleman who was involved in a ruinous lawsuit over a lease of his little shop brought all the profits of the previous week and deposited them as he prayed for a legal and just victory. The next day or on the second day his goods were so badly damaged by the smoke and water, caused by a fire in the store next door, that the insurance company took the stock at his valuation and the landlord withdrew his suit.

Another case generally believed, but not fully confirmed, was of an Englishman who, not having money enough to pay his fare to

Australia, deposited all that he did have into the offering and prayed for his passage. It was asserted and not contradicted that he found a one-hundred-dollar bill the next day in his wallet or in his bureau drawer, placed there by some friend whom he could not discover. Another related how she determined to risk all on one prayer, and gave all as she prayed. When the plumbers came to repair a leak the next week after the prayer they discovered a loose board in the floor under which her father had secretly hidden his money. The sum she found was much more than enough to pay off the overdue mortgage on her cottage.

There were probably fifty such cases reported in detail at the time. But a solemn sense of sacredness connected with those experiences pervaded the assemblies, and no notice of the cases was given from the pulpit. And yet a calm and careful examination of the results of that exercise of faith has often suggested a strong doubt whether that experience did not do more harm than good.

The direct and immediate results convinced the devout believers that when a true servant of God makes a sincere offering God will invariably accept the offering and answer in some manner his petition fully. But it seems impossible to find the line between the motives which may make an offering acceptable or unacceptable to God. The remarkable success of that day of offering led many to believe that they could drive a bargain with the Lord. Absurd as it seems, there were many earnest Christians who believed that they could invest a small sum in an offering and by asking for a large sum would make an immense profit in the transaction. A dangerous spirit of gambling arose. Noble men and women were caught in a theological net spread by the spirit of evil. The heavens soon became brass and no offering seemed acceptable. It was a dangerous period in the history of the church. Some gave up all faith in prayer. The speculative spirit led some to give largely with a

hope of a hundredfold return. The treasury of the church was being filled rapidly, but there were divisions over the investment of the money. Some strong members left the church, while several counted their offerings as a dead loss and went back "into the world" altogether.

But there is left a good foundation for a consistent belief in the power of consistent prayer in producing objective results. While it may be difficult for a human father to discern between the motives of his child who brings him a gift so as to be sure that the gift is the exhibition of a pure affection, yet the Lord has no such limitation. He knows whether the offering is a gambling venture or a lovely deed inspired by a pure, unselfish love. God does love and does answer a cheerful giver. The loving son remembers the unselfish devotion of his mother and the offerings she gave him without thought of any return or reward and his delight to have her ask him to do for her. God is love, and he loves the lover. His

intrinsic nature compels him to answer the call of his beloved. But he cannot be driven or tricked into granting the prayer of a greedy deceiver whose whole motive is selfish. The idea is foolishly unrighteous which looks upon the arrangement of Providence as a slot machine into which the pretended worshiper may put a copper penny and draw out a gold dollar. As gold must be given for gold, so love must be given for love.

Unanswered Prayers

V

Chapter V

Unanswered Prayers

THE many letters which report that prayers have not been answered made the examination into that department of the investigation to be most discouraging until the testimonies were read the second or third time. Slowly it dawned on the reader that the writers did not know, after all, whether their prayers were answered or not. A bright light was let in on the subject by the expression of one who stated that he had prayed for the means to pay off a mortgage on his home until he had abandoned all hope and had decided to sell his house to the railroad company for a siding. In answer to a later inquiry the discouraged petitioner stated that the jury, to which by contract both parties agreed to leave the assessment of the "land damages," had given him money enough to buy a much finer home

away from the continual annoyance of passing trains.

Many of the wholly disappointed petitioners closed their complaints or doleful faultfinding outbursts with the stereotyped quotation, "nevertheless, not my will, but Thine be done!" To some "the heavens are as brass"; to others, their prayers did not go "higher than their heads," and to still others their prayers became meaningless and like "words called into the thin air." This phase of our topic could not be followed up as far as a careful investigator could wish, because it involved so much correspondence and so much delay. But a general statement of the conclusions reached by those whose prayers had, seemingly, not been answered can be safely made. They all naturally and necessarily formed a concept of God by imagining him to be an all-mighty and all-good man. The human mind seems incapable of forming any other idea of God than can be obtained from a human model, greatly enlarged. Jesus knew what was in

man when he taught his disciples to say, "Our Father." Human kings, human fathers, human saints human sinners are really pictured in the minds of all who strive to visualize the Almighty, or his Son, or the angels. No Hindu can even think Nirvana. No mind can meditate on nothing. Everything conceived in the mind must be like something else. Reasoning from "the known to the unknown," or "the lesser to the greater," is the only possible process by which man can know God. So all those seemingly defeated ones had looked up to God as to a great man, and when he seemed to do nothing in answer to their requests they concluded that he either did not hear or that he would not even reply. They did not think, however, of their heavenly Father as they would of an earthly father who was perfectly good. A good and wise father must often deny his child the article for which he asks, but he will not dismiss the matter with a curt denial. He will try to find something else for his child,

as has been already stated in a previous chapter. The testimonies which asserted that the all-good God had denied or ignored the requests of his followers were the strongest proofs of the fact that God had granted their requests. The father who would not give a stone to his child who asked for bread would not give a stone to his starving child who asked for a stone. In those seasons when the attention of the people was centered specially on the results of prayer there was often heard the expression, "Perhaps He sees that it is best for me that I should not get the blessing for which I asked." But a consensus of opinion taken from the mass of correspondence showed a general belief that there are no unanswered prayers. They believed that in some other way which was better and wiser God sent his child a more valuable token of his love.

Those reports gave the student an insight into the popular religious beliefs of the common people. The theological creeds

and formulas which are found in the libraries are written by talented, studious scholars who put their own conclusion into print and do not attempt to set out the opinions retained by the masses. Often a silent congregation retains a strong belief in some theological idea which the preacher does not recognize. Often the minister of a church, having the reputation of being firmly orthodox, teaches theories which are not accepted by his hearers. Hence, the scrutiny of all that correspondence covering so many years gave an insight into the faith of the everyday Christian which was enlightening and helpful.

The testimony came from a much wider circle than the actual membership of that church, as visitors at the Temple from other quarters of the earth sent in their accounts of the way the Lord had answered their prayers. In those letters some remark or some statement often unconsciously disclosed this belief relating to prayer. Their beliefs concerning death, the Judgment, the

future life, the methods used by the Lord in his administration, and the occupations of the saints in heaven most strangely harmonized when a careful digest was made. The divine plan of salvation and the Creator's purpose revealed in natural law were sometimes quite at variance with the dogmas of the pulpit. But the common theories came out so distinctly that a statement of them is a matter of no difficulty.

The common people connected directly or indirectly with the Christian churches believe:

That every person lives on as an individual after the body dies.

That the life on earth determines the state of happiness or misery in the spiritual existence.

That the soul is of the same substance as that of the angels.

That the occupation of the redeemed in the spirit world is the same as that of the angels.

That the departed persons know one another and keep company with those they have loved and known on earth.

That they serve God as his messengers to the inhabitants of the earth.

That they cannot be called nor can they visit the earth unless especially sent by the Almighty.

That the condition of the wicked or of those unfit for God's service in heaven is unknown.

That after the Judgment there may come the annihilation of the wicked.

That heaven is a condition of everlasting progress in knowledge.

That salvation depends on the intrinsic character, and that a conversion to Christ is a conversion to a godly character.

That many of the ceremonies of the churches are useless, and that the various denominations should endeavor to unite in some one federation.

That God is gradually building up a perfect human race on earth.

That he commands his servants to come to his aid in securing that end.

That the best or only way to fit ourselves for heaven is in the practice and discipline of helping humanity in the development of a higher race.

That Christ is a divine Spirit, existing from everlasting to everlasting, and that his atonement for sinners is a part of God's great purpose to people earth and heaven with perfect beings.

But the consensus of the opinion which related to prayer and the methods the Lord adopts to convey his answers should have special notice here. There was a de-

cided agreement in their imaginative conception of the way the Lord arranged for the conveyance of his decisions to those who call upon him.

They hold in common that God is "immanent" in nature, and his replies to our requests may come as quietly and mysteriously as God's answer to the farmer who, in an act which is a prayer, places a seed in the ground.

Many testified to their belief that "all things work together" in producing the effects of prayer on those who love God. Nearly all, also, believed that God often called an angel to him when the prayer of faith came to him from the earth, and that he gave the angel personal instructions to visit the petitioner and aid him or her. The views of the Bible and its doctrines, according to the general opinion, appear to be that it is the best book ever written, and that it was inspired by a purpose so pure and unselfish as to be divine. One old lady expressed the general sentiment of the

entire body when she wrote that, "the Bible is the best book I know of, and it is the only one which tells me about heaven, and I don't let any fool of a scholar argue it out of my life."

The feeling of the average reader of the Bible is decidedly in favor of the King James translation of the Bible, with the introductive address to the king omitted. The division of that old translation into short verses was of great assistance to the memory, and was generally quoted by all classes. But when the new translation was set solidly in type it decidedly changed the appearance of the book and added emphasis to an impression that a new and different book had taken the place of the Bible. The Bible was largely discarded by the common people wherever the new version was forcibly introduced. The old translation, with explanatory notes in the margin, was the ideal Bible for the masses, and had it been retained the general disappearance of the Bible from the homes and libraries would

have been avoided. The so-called authorized version was followed by many versions privately translated to emphasize some creed or belief and added much to the confusion of the common people. The changes in the wording of the new translation were sufficient also to make those who had quoted the old version with confidence doubt the correctness of their previous knowledge, and led, naturally, to the discontinuance of Bible quotations by those who knew the Bible best. The popular opinion appears to be that the new translation was a great hindrance to the use of the English Bible.

The number of readers of the Bible, however, is much larger than the estimate which many modern writers give. The Sabbath school and haphazard pulpit essays have not so completely supplanted the home study of the Scriptures, as has been so often stated. The use of the Bible as the standard of moral character continues to be the practice of millions who may not study it closely or may

not read it at all. That miracle-working Book is still a most powerful moral force in all departments of our civilized life. No patriot or respectable scholar can ignore the value of the Bible as the highest literature or as the foundation for all just human laws. The people do believe in it.

Prayer for Others

VI

Chapter VI

Prayer for Others

ALTHOUGH it is difficult to divide the subject of prayer into clearly separate departments, yet, for the purpose of concentrating the thought of the reader, and with the idea of emphasizing the importance of the events selected, this chapter has been set apart for special discussion. The possible relation of the law of mental telepathy to this experience has already been suggested and need not be repeated here. But the recent general sympathy with the parents of a child which was stolen led many Christians to pray for the recovery of the precious little one. At the Temple in 1889 such a case was presented at the church services and an appeal made to the people to ask the Lord to influence the kidnapers to bring back the child. That led to the discussion of many previous cases where the

parents believed that their lost child was returned to them in answer to prayer. In two cases each child was carefully deposited at the door of its parents. In both cases they had held special meetings of their neighbors to pray for the return of their child, and in one case they had appealed to the priest for his intercession. If the Lord used his direct power to bring the child home it must have been used through some event or some direct suggestion having an influence on the minds of the captors, because in the cases here mentioned there was no clew revealed which could lead to the abductors.

But an older case may illustrate what most probably did occur in other instances. In 1889 a child two years of age was stolen from the front yard of a home in Charlestown, Massachusetts (now a part of Boston). A large ransom was demanded which was far beyond the reach of the parents. After several weeks of excited search by all the police organizations of the nation the child

was secretly returned, without ransom, and left cheerfully rapping on its parents' door. One of the robber gang who had conspired to steal children for ransoms, and who had laid the successful plan to capture that child, was arrested several days after the return of the child and confessed his share in the crime. His account of the influences and events which led to the restoration of the child was a most impressive and convincing illustration of the spiritual forces God may use in such cases.

The band of four robbers could not quiet the child when they carried him away, and they resorted to a gag which nearly killed the child. But the frightened little fellow screamed whenever the gag was taken from his mouth and would not eat or drink. The child was evidently near to death. Then one of the robbers carried the child to a woman who occupied a room over a saloon in Brooklyn, New York. The woman was able to pacify the child, and explained to acquaintances that the child was an orphan

whose mother, a near relation, had just died. The woman knew that the child was being held for a ransom, of which she was promised a large share. But she did not know from what part of the country the child came. She was an irreligious, coarse, profane woman, and cared only for money and drink. But one day she sent a letter to the resort of the gang and told them that she had a clear presentiment that something dreadful would happen to them if they did not hurry up the business of returning the child. As they paid no attention to her warnings she wrote again, saying that she would keep the child but ten days longer. They then visited her or wrote to her to care for the child three weeks longer, as they were sure of the "swag" by that time.

In the following week one of the gang was caught by the foot in a falling window sash as he tried to leap to a fire escape and he was burned to death while he hung there. The hotel was in full blaze when he awoke and his only possible escape was by that

window. Another one of the gang swallowed a broken glass button when hastily eating a piece of biscuit at a railroad restaurant. He was taken to a hospital or sanitarium in Montreal, where after long agony he died, and his body was buried in the public ground.

When the woman who held the child heard of that she took the child boldly to the house where the other three or four abductors met and flatly told them that all of them would come under a curse if they did not return that child to his parents. But they made a joke of their comrades' death, and gave her brandy until she wandered home drunk. The child was then placed in charge of a poor widow in Hoboken, who was told that the mother was dead and the father was at sea, but would soon return. They paid liberally in advance for the child's board, and none of the circumstances awakened the least suspicion in the widow's mind. One night she slept with the child's arm across her neck. She

awoke with a dreadful feeling of being choked to death by a strong man who exclaimed, "That child is stolen, and you must appear before God at once to give an account." The details of her experiences are here quoted from the New York *Herald.*

The widow called it "a waking dream." She was so shocked by the experience that she would not keep the child and sent for the man who had brought the child and demanded that the child be at once taken away. She did not believe that her warning was a premonition of any crime nor that the child had been stolen, but she was in a state of strange terror and told the man who came for the child that she was too nervous to board so young a child.

It appears that when the robber returned to the usual rendezvous, after leaving the child at an orphan asylum and agreeing to pay for the board of "his child," he found another member of the party down with a sudden and dangerous fever. Then he, too, was struck with an impression of coming doom. It remained upon him night and day. He became so intoxicated that he was locked in the jail. In the depression of his recovery from the drink he determined to kill himself. Then the idea that he might escape from his horror by taking the child back to its

home became so insistent that as soon as he was released he went after the child and took it back on the night train. He told the lisping child to rap on his father's door and "call for papa." Then he hastened away and did not return to his former gang.

This authentic incident may or may not prove that prayer was answered, as it is not known what prayers were offered for that child's recovery. But it does show how the Lord may work in other cases where prayers are openly made. The angels of God are sent to pronounce curses on the disobedient sometimes, and terrible plagues are sent on men by them. Hence, the Lord does use various curses to work out his will and it seems reasonable to believe that he does warn men and women by terrible mental impressions.

This theory is strongly confirmed by the testimonies found in this large correspondence. Lost children were restored after prayers were made for them in startlingly impressive manners. At Cape May a

fisherman obeyed a wholly unexplainable impulse and put back to the marshes, feeling that he had "left something," but unable to remember what it was. There he heard the cry of the lost child, wading waist deep in the incoming tide. A merchant of Wilmington, Delaware, wrote that his child was taken by the grandparents when his wife died, and after the grandparents died the child was hidden by the relatives. The reason for the action was because of a difference of religious faith. He began one day a regular system of prayer for the recovery of his child. He went to a fishing camp in the woods of Maine in August and his child came into his log hut for a drink of water. She was with a party who camped near by in tents. Another stolen child was the little son of a doctor who prayed long and hard for the return of his little son. The sudden attack of chills felt by a passenger on a Hudson River boat at the pier caused the officers to call him on board from the wharf. The afflicted matron and

his own child were in the same stateroom together.

One trustworthy officer of the church testified that his child had wandered away from the railroad station while he was asleep on the bench, and that he could not find her after an all-night search. He prayed at his family prayers, asking the Lord in sobs to protect and return his child. He said that an impression as strong as a voice insisted in his mind that he ought to search in some freight yards across the river. The yards were one mile from the station. He told his friends how he felt and insisted that he would go to the yards and search. There he found his starving child under an old fallen fence. He never could discover any satisfactory solution of the mystery of her presence in the railroad yards. She must have toddled the whole mile among vehicles in the night. He has firmly believed in guardian angels ever since that day.

There were numerous cases told of mental impressions made upon children away from

home by the influence of a mother's prayer. To all of these incidents the skeptic will assert that, though there be millions of cases where men and women "happened to think" of the person praying at the moment the prayer was offered, it would not be conclusive proof that the thought was suggested by the prayer or in answer to it. But this suggestion presents other cases wherein it is far more difficult to disbelieve than it is to believe. The weight of evidence is almost overwhelmingly on the side of the Christian believer.

The belief that God will so adjust his providences as to bring to a person friends, weather, business, health, and domestic peace in answer to the prayer of some insistent friend is almost universal. General Garibaldi stated that he found that his belief in the efficacy of his mother's prayers in securing protection of his life when in danger was accepted by all his friends as a statement which at least might be realized. The common-sense view that

where a theory cannot be subjected to proof either way it surely is wisest to believe in that view which has the strongest influence for good on the life and usefulness of the believer. What a man believeth, as well as what he thinketh, determines what he is. He who believes in the efficacy of his father's or mother's prayers lives a nobler life than the skeptic. The sincere trusting heart which believes that the Christ is the Son of God, and that man is under the oversight of a loving heavenly Father, is nearer the highest standard of human perfection than is the unstable and reckless man who claims that all things exist by chance.

The friend who sincerely prays for you is a friend who would sacrifice most for you in case of need. Two lovers, separated far and praying long for each other, is an exhibition of the truest, sweetest love. It is, also, the best test of God's disposition to heed the requests of his children. No prayer for another can be felt to be effective which is not inspired more or less by real

love. The loving heart is a large part of a great previous character. He or she has an intercessory disposition—an intrinsic tendency toward doing good, and that, with a strong, clean mind, makes a true Christian. Such men are grateful to those who pray for them, and are impelled to pray for others. These are some of the reasons given by Christians why people ought always to pray.

Forms of Prayer

VII

Chapter VII

Forms of Prayer

IT appears that the extremest ritualist does not feel wholly bound to his prayer book. The people exercise great liberty in the choice of words or postures when they go to Christ in anxious prayer. Appropriate forms are reasonably sought for varying occasions, and some of the forms of prayer which are venerable for age and sublimity are reverenced and adopted because so often they best express the heart's sincere desire. The Lord's Prayer is recited with profit in a formal church service, but is seldom recited in time of extreme need. During the earthquake at San Francisco no one was known to have repeated the Lord's Prayer. Christ directed his disciples to pray "after that manner," and the spirit of that prayer, as well as the divine ideas or principles it contains, are applicable everywhere.

But the exact words in English are not adjustable to every occasion. Men in earnest ask for what they need in their own words and in their own way. The effectual and fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much because it is fervent and righteous. To be in every way right, and then to add the inspiration or fire or fervency, are conditions which only the righteous can fill. But, happily, the sinner is not required to be right in all things before his prayer is heard. The stately dignity and beautiful phraseology of the Catholic churches, the impressive forms of the old English ritual, or the simple appeal of the mission worker are all alike acceptable to God when they are the expression of real heart worship or of a call for relief in some actual need.

In the worship at the Baptist Temple there has been no form of prayer in which the people so sincerely and so generally joined as in the prayers found in some of the hymns. A study of the human or apparent agencies which may have had some in-

fluence does not fully account for the spirit of prayer which some hymns awaken. A cool and analytical examination of this subject was made by the preacher one Sabbath morning for the purpose of recording it here. A relation of the plain facts, without using the circumstances to establish any sectarian theory, will most clearly set out the case before the impartial critic. The hymn chosen that morning for the opening of the service was selected chiefly because it is a prayer. The three verses are as follows:

FATHER, WHATE'ER OF EARTHLY BLISS

Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
  Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at thy throne of grace,
  Let this petition rise:

Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
  From every murmur free;
The blessings of thy grace impart,
  And make me live to thee.

Let the sweet hope that thou art mine
  My life and death attend,
Thy presence through my journey shine,
  And crown my journey's end.

The people were everywhere in motion. Some were coming in, some were standing near the doors, some were talking in low voices in the rear of the deep gallery, and many were arranging for their wraps or hats, while all, in the freedom of the social atmosphere ever prevailing there, were smilingly nodding to acquaintances or searching for hymn books. The opening chorus of the Children's Church, at their regular service, in the lower hall, could be indistinctly heard. The painful and awkward silence which embarrasses and chills the incoming worshiper in some churches was altogether absent that morning. The preacher began to read the hymn without waiting for silence or attention. He simply remarked, "Let us sincerely and intelligently use this old hymn for our opening prayer." The congregation arose while the organist played a sweet, tender prelude, giving the impression that the organ itself was praying. A fair-haired child, kneeling in a snow-white night robe, lisping its

evening prayer, was suggested to hundreds by the worshipful music. The well-trained religious chorus began to sing with devotion and unity and opened the prayer with the harmonious call, "Father!" The congregation instinctively raised their eyes toward heaven. Then all came strongly into the hymn with the petition:

"Father, whate'er of earthly bliss
Thy sovereign will denies,
Accepted at thy throne of grace,
Let this petition rise:

"Give me a calm, a thankful heart,
From every murmur free;
The blessings of thy grace impart,
And make me live to thee."

There was a single strain of an interlude and then the solemn prayer was entered upon with an unction and appreciation that thrilled every soul in the great audience:

"Let the sweet hope that thou art mine
My life and death attend,
Thy presence through my journey shine,
And crown my journey's end."

Then came a pause, and with a magnificent volume of sound the emphatic "Amen!" confirmed the earnestness of the prayer. That was a real prayer! The holiness of the spirit of worship had taken possession of the whole congregation. All were interested in the reading of the Bible, and when the notices were being read a most saintly old deacon sent up a slip of paper to the preacher on which were written these words—"Pastor, please give us another prayer for the next hymn!" The pastor read the note to the people without comment, and looked over the hymn book for another prayer, when his eyes fell on the following hymn:

JESUS, I MY CROSS HAVE TAKEN

Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou, from hence, my all shalt be:
Perish every fond ambition,
All I've sought, and hop'd, and known;
Yet how rich is my condition,
God and heav'n are still my own!

Let the world despise and leave me,
They have left my Saviour, too;
Human hearts and looks deceive me;
Thou art not, like man, untrue;
And, while thou shalt smile upon me,
God of wisdom, love, and might,
Foes may hate and friends may shun me;
Show thy face, and all is bright.

Go, then, earthly fame and treasure!
Come, disaster, scorn, and pain!
In thy service, pain is pleasure;
With thy favor, loss is gain.
I have called thee, "Abba, Father";
I have stayed my heart on thee,
Storms may howl, and clouds may gather,
All must work for good to me.

Man and trouble may distress me,
'Twill but drive me to thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heaven will bring me sweeter rest.
Oh, 'tis not in grief to harm me
While thy love is left to me;
Oh, 'twere not in joy to charm me
Were that joy unmixed with thee.

Know, my soul, thy full salvation;
Rise o'er sin, and fear, and care;
Joy to find in every station
Something still to do or bear.

Think what Spirit dwells within thee;
What a Father's smile is thine;
What a Saviour died to win thee:
Child of heaven, shouldst thou repine?

Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith and winged by prayer;
Heaven's eternal day's before thee,
God's own hand shall guide thee there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission,
Swift shall pass thy pilgrim days,
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight and prayer to praise.

Oh, pity the seekers after God who go to a house of prayer to be provoked and harassed by the performance of some gymnastic performance in acoustics, by some professional entertainer of theatrical audiences. Pity, indeed, the devout soul pleading for comfort in some deep sorrow whose sore heart is wrenched and bruised by the discordant attempts to leap, catlike, from shelf to shelf, up and down the musical scale. Pity the overtempted contrite sinner who enters to pray for the strength to keep his resolution to reform and finds himself in a sham ceremonial which intro-

duces the inartistic performers who almost force him to do worse.

The extremely cultivated voice which seeks a prize exhibition of varied tones, or the extremely crude egotism of the community singer who ties himself in squirming knots as he yells the sacred and pathetic hymns which were written for the deep devotions of a broken heart are both sacrilegious and disgraceful. Pity the congregation who, after wasting a most precious hour inside, hasten out, discussing along the street the wonders of the wild musical exhibition, and forgetting that they went in to worship.

When the hymn we mentioned above was announced and read deliberately the preacher said, feelingly, "Let us pray!" The prayer in that hymn was used by all. As they sang, their faces flushed. Old men shed tears, and the preacher decided, before the last verse was sung, to take for his theme the last two lines:

> Hope shall change to glad fruition,
> Faith to sight and *prayer to praise.*

One could almost catch the gleam of the glories that John saw at Patmos. The place was a Bethel to all the assembly. All were glad they were marching on to Zion, and praised God with all their hearts for his promise of a home in that land where there is no night. The deep, soul-filled joy of the morning worship carried good cheer, hope, and courage into a thousand homes and made the week's labors enjoyable and prosperous.

In choosing the form of prayer the temperament and state of health of the worshiper may be an important consideration. But whether in hymns or psalms or gestures, the call must be earnestly sincere. When the formal, monotonous recitations of the customary Church rituals are recalled it becomes a marvel that the Church survives the pious hypocrisy and sacrilegious indifference of the Church pulpits and altars. The pulpit is seen by all and the words and tones of the preacher are heard by all; the place is the most conspicuous in the church life; and if the action or the ceremony is

hypocritical or careless there, then the whole church is permeated by the same spirit. The form of expression must be a secondary consideration in all prayer, while appropriateness and custom have rightfully an influence on the petition. Yet the essential thing is in the natural cry of a needy soul. Prayer, as a public function, should be a stimulant or an instructor leading the individuals in the congregation to pray by and for themselves. The people must pray. The need of this was apparent in many of the requests made for prayer at the Temple in Philadelphia. "Lord, teach us to pray," is ever the appeal of the religious masses. The union of two or three in concerted prayer for a definite thing was very effective. The observation of the same hour by many people has often developed a deep religious life and secured practical results. The testimony of one active business man exhibited triumphantly the use of continuous prayer and may serve as a comprehensive illustration. He wrote:

I fought it out with myself, knowing the Lord Christ would work with me. When I awoke in the morning I thanked God for shelter and sleep. Then I began to pray for the least things of my morning preparations—my clothes, my bath, my comb and brush, my articles used in any way. I thanked God for, and prayed for, the continuance of his kindness. I managed to keep in a state of prayer at the breakfast table. I prayed for instruction in purchasing the necessities of the home. I prayed as I left my door. I prayed along the street for wisdom to transact business. I prayed for the persons I met on my way. I prayed for the clerks, for the customers, for thoughts, for words, for farsightedness, for a contented disposition consistent with activity. If I wrote a letter I asked the Lord to aid me in the writing and to protect the letter on to its delivery. I did not speak aloud or tell people I was praying. I kept the Lord constantly in mind. I had some discouraging experiences with myself, but I kept pursuing the idea. At last it grew easy and enjoyable. It was in every way a success. I did not waste my money. I did not carelessly destroy articles I used. I did not overeat. I did not get angry with my employees. I felt a real interest in the welfare of others. I did my best and left all to God. It is now a settled habit. My health is almost perfect. Before I began to pray I was asthmatic and gouty. If this has anything boastful about it,

the Lord forgive me. But in the request for my experience you insisted on "frankness in all accounts."

Whether it be possible for all to reach that prayerful condition and retain it permanently cannot be denied or asserted infallibly. But it is evident that but few reach it. The exhortation that is appropriate here appears to be to urge an honest effort to get as near to that devotional condition as possible and to hold all the ground we do gain.

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